Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration: "Upper Butte Creek Forest Health Project"

Posted on July 8, 2026

LEAD AGENCY: Butte County Resource Conservation District
641 Entler Ave, Ste. 47, Chico, CA 95928

CONTACT PERSON: Wolfgang Rougle, Planning & Watershed Program Manager, (530) 721-0164

PROJECT LOCATION: The project is located entirely on Lassen National Forest lands in parts of Butte, Plumas, and Tehama Counties, California and has already been authorized through the NEPA process. In order to secure State funding and permits, CEQA compliance is required. The project area spans 19,826 acres within the following:

- Township 27N, Range 4E, Sections 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, and 36.
- Township 27N, Range 5E, Sections 31, 32, and 33.
- Township 26N, Range 4E, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, and 25.
- Township 26N, Range 5E, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 30.

Elevations in the project area range from 4,050 to 7,087 feet above sea level. The project area is in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. It is rural and remote, but since part is in Butte County, part is within an MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization.) The project area is not on any of the lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code regarding hazardous waste facilities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: To restore a natural range of variation in forest composition and structure, biodiversity, and meadow health, and to improve the area's transportation network as well as its in-stream habitat, the project's activities include:

- Manual and mechanical thinning
- Prescribed fire
- Post-wildfire reforestation including the use of herbicides for site preparation
- Meadow, riparian, and stream restoration to improve hydrological and aquatic function, including through process-based restoration
- Road route realignment
- Invasive plant management
- Establishment of strategic fuel breaks and maintenance of access routes to improve emergency response ingress and public egress capability

These treatments are designed to work interactively to restore fire-adapted ecosystem processes, protect critical watersheds, reduce the likelihood of high-severity wildfire burn, and increase the capacity of the landscape to recover from disturbance. Additionally, mechanical treatments include commercial logging and watershed and fuels reduction activities that will provide economic support to local businesses and communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: Because the project is on Federal land, it is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared under NEPA and was signed by the Lassen National Forest Supervisor on Feb 18, 2026.

Because State funding will or may be used to carry out parts of the project, it is also subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). To fulfill the requirements of CEQA, this draft Negative Declaration (DND) has been prepared by the Butte County Resource Conservation District as lead agency. The DND is in conformance with Section 15070, Subsection (a), of the State of California Guidelines for Implementation of the CEQA. The purpose of the draft ND and the Initial Study Checklist was to 1) fulfill the public notice and procedural requirements of CEQA so that State grant funding may be used to implement portions of the project; 2) determine whether the proposed project would result in any environmental impacts not previously analyzed under NEPA and, 3) if so, whether any of these impacts might be significant, either before or after mitigation.

Butte RCD finds the proposed program, as designed, would have no impacts requiring mitigation.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: A 30-day minimum public review period for the Negative Declaration will commence on July 8, 2026, and end at 5 pm Friday, August 7, 2026, for interested individuals and public agencies to submit written comments on the document. Any written comments on the Negative Declaration must be received at the above address within the public review period, or be emailed to: wolfy@bcrcd.org. Copies of the Negative Declaration are available for review 1) at the above address during normal business hours, and 2) 24 hours at day at https://www.bcrcd.org/announcements.

Thad Walker, District Manager
Butte County Resource Conservation District

Date 7/8/26